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Air Force enrollment sets new record

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

U.S. AIR FORCE AT A GLANCE

"In a smaller, leaner and more expeditionary-focused Air Force, it is essential that our Airmen have the knowledge and competency to accomplish our mission...through advanced education."

- The Honorable Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force

AIR FORCE ENROLLMENT SETS NEW RECORD

Following a 2002 memorandum of agreement between the secretaries of the Navy and Air Force forming a new educational alliance between the services, the number of Air Force students at the Naval Postgraduate School has steadily increased. That surge is due primarily to two factors: a boost in general quota Air Force officers assigned to NPS and an increase in the number of majors and some captains who select NPS under the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Intermediate Development Education (IDE) Program.

As of mid July, NPS has 320 in-residence Air Force students enrolled across all four of its graduate schools, with the largest contingents in the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy MBA program, National Security Affairs regional studies, Special Operations, Space Systems, and Meteorology. Of those 320, 309 are master's degree and 11 doctoral degree candidates. Forty four percent are majors, 35 percent captains, 18 percent 1st lieutenants, and three percent 2nd lieutenants.

"In the post 9/11 environment, the Air Force made a conscious effort to increase the number of mid-career officers who are culture- and language-qualified and to really use that as a promotion indicator," said Chief of AFIT NPS Programs Maj. Pamela Dickey.

"All Air Force IDE selectees are top rung," said Air Force Lt. Col. Terry Smith, NPS lecturer and information warfare/electronic warfare program officer. "They're hand selected from a very competitive field when promoted to major."

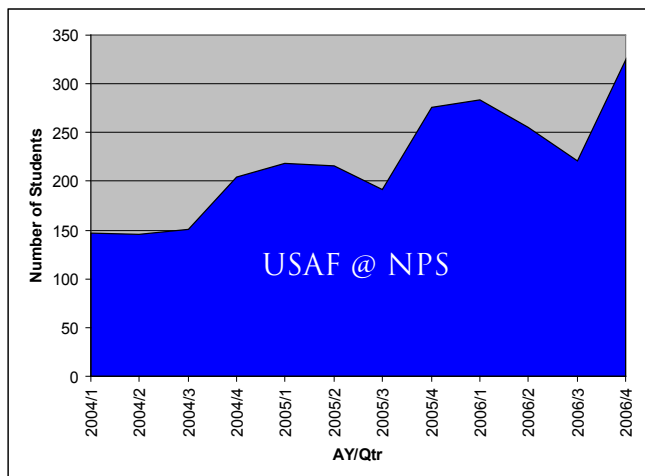
"I don't know how to aim below the top, and NPS was my No. 1 choice," said Maj. Michael Moyles, an Information Warfare student whose last assignment was as a communica-



NPS Acting President Air Force Col. David Smarsh (right) and Air Force military instructor Lt. Col. Terry Smith (left) orient new Air Force students (left to right, center) 2nd Lts. Kristin Pearson, Walter Darnell, and Seth Cannon in Herrmann Hall. All three, together with 2nd Lt. Michael Phelan, reported directly to NPS from the Air Force Academy through the Advanced Academic Degree Program.

tions-information officer at Offutt Air Force Base. "Once I got into in-residence PME (professional military education), which is the hardest cut, the hardest school to get into was NPS. I fought for two and a half years just to get here."

"The Air Force is really serious about higher education," said Maj. Ryan Craycraft, an F-16 pilot and incoming IDE student in National Security Affairs. "Two or three years ago, the service added purely academic master's degree programs to Professional Military Education within the IDE process, and it's a huge privilege to be selected for in-residence IDE. I filled out my dream sheet, and the NPS School of International Graduate Studies was a perfect venue." Craycraft completed his Joint PME requirement by distance learning before coming to NPS. Upon graduating, he will become an Air Force International Affairs Specialist with a focus on eastern and western Europe and Russia.




A handful of IDE students who choose NPS enroll in a special 12-month master's degree program, rather than the normal 18, and then attend the Defense Language Institute, also in Monterey, for six months of foreign language in lieu of a thesis. Upon completing the DLI component, they receive a graduate degree from NPS.

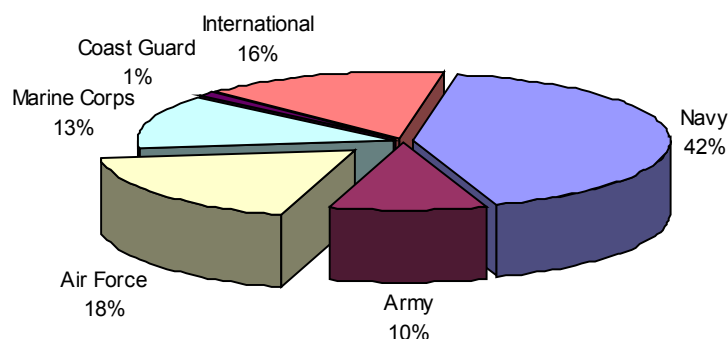
The Air Force also offers a limited number of Graduate Scholar Program (GSP) scholarships to top cadets fresh from the Air Force Academy.

"I've heard only great things about NPS from civilians, and graduates and students who are already here," said 2nd Lt. Michael Phelan, a new GSP student who will specialize in western Europe in the National Security Affairs Department.

"We continue to work closely with AFIT to implement the 2002 memorandum of agreement," said NPS Acting President and Senior NPS Air Force Officer Col. Dave Smarsh. "Successes include elimination of duplication by moving programs; creation of oversight boards for acquisition, meteorology, space, and aeronautical engineering; and the sharing of best practices." The Naval Postgraduate School currently has eight Air Force faculty members, including Special Operations Chair, Defense Analysis Col. Brian Greenshields, and Lt. Col. Bryan Hudgens, a lecturer in the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy.

"NPS offers Air Force officers an unparalleled, high-leverage opportunity to become highly educated while achieving other important goals, like completing PME in residence and earning

multiple professional certifications in a joint environment," said Hudgens. "Where else can you study defense acquisition in a truly world-class environment on a cutting-edge wireless campus with an award-winning library and renowned academic scholars working side by side with active and retired military leaders from senior levels of DoD to educate the next generation of leaders? And where else can you chat almost every week with senior government officials from DoD, the executive branch and Congress about their latest challenges and initiatives? From personal experience, I know all this really matters. My customers in the field tell me our NPS graduates are incredibly well prepared for very demanding jobs, and they want us to send more like them as fast as we can." 



324 Air Force students graduated in Spring Quarter 2006

NPS' DECORATED AIR FORCE STUDENTS



Air Force officers show off medals following an awards ceremony Sept. 5, in King Hall. In front of an audience of fellow NPS students, the fourteen had their Meritorious Service Medal and Air Force Commendation Medal certificates read aloud as Acting NPS President Col. David Smarsh (far right) pinned on the medals to each of the officer's uniforms. All of the men and women were recognized for major contributions to their previous commands.